



# Olmsted 200

Bicentennial Notes about Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township –  
First Farmed in 1814 and Settled in 1815

Issue 45

February 1, 2017

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## Olmsted Community Church Built Anew in 1950s

*This is the second in a series of two stories about the Olmsted Community Church, which was formed through the merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Congregational Church 100 years ago in January 1917. For the first story, see Issue 44 from last month.*

The Olmsted Community Church building that stands at 7853 Main Street has been such a grand, established structure in downtown Olmsted Falls that it seems to always have been there. Of course, it hasn't. Just like many Baby Boomers, it was conceived and created in the 1950s.

For more than 45 years after the 1917 formation of the Olmsted Community Church as a religious entity, the congregation used both of the original church buildings. The former Methodist Episcopal Church on the west side of Columbia Road provided the sanctuary for Sunday services, while the former Congregational Church



*This 1956 photo shows the Olmsted Community Church before the sanctuary was built a few years later.*

provided space for Sunday school and community meetings. That was the setup through World War I, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression and World War II.

The United States was in the middle of the Korean War when changes began. In July 1952, the Olmsted Community Church welcomed the Rev. Richard Mapes as its new pastor. He was instrumental in leading the congregation to consider a new, bigger church building. In October 1952, the church began a fundraising campaign.

First to be built was the Christian education wing to the north of the site of the former Congregational Church. It was dedicated on February 26, 1956. By then, the church was growing fast, no doubt helped by the post-World War II baby boom and the construction of more housing in Olmsted Falls, West View and Olmsted Township. One sign of that growth was that, in 1958, the church decided to add the position of associate pastor, which was filled that June by the hiring of the Rev. Don Norenberg.



*The former Methodist Episcopal Church became the Masonic Lodge (above) for more than four decades until 2001, when Clint Williams acquired it and made it the Grand Pacific Wedding Chapel (right).*



On January 11, 1956, shortly before the new building went into use, the Community Church sold the former Methodist Episcopal Church for \$25,000 to the Olmsted Masonic Lodge. But the former Congregational Church did not last. It was torn down to make way for the current parking lot between the Community Church and the former town hall that now houses the Moosehead restaurant.

One other change occurred along Main Street as a result of the Community Church's building project. An old house was in the way of the new church. It had been built by Newton P. Loomis in 1834, when he settled in Olmsted. He actually built it a bit farther south, and by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was in its second location – and it couldn't stay there. Fortunately, the church did not tear it down but instead donated it to the village in 1955. The village then paid to have it moved to the other side of Main Street and also provided another \$1,000 to turn it into a library. It served as Olmsted's library until February 2013, when the Cuyahoga County Public Library opened a new Olmsted Falls branch along Mapleway Drive near City Hall.



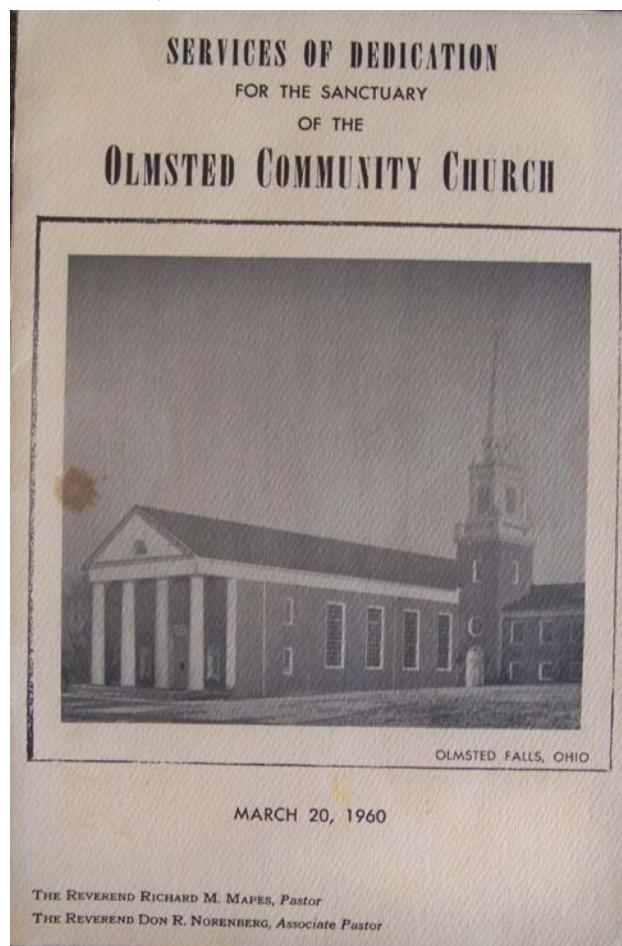
*The house Newton P. Loomis built in 1834 had to be moved across Main Street in 1955 to make room for the new Community Church. It served as a library until February 2013.*

In October 1958, the church's Building Fund Committee began raising funds for a new sanctuary to the north of the Christian education wing. Ground was broken on April 12, 1959. The sanctuary was dedicated on March 20, 1960.

"With a rapid upsurge of membership and continued satisfactory growth in Christian stewardship, the sanctuary we gratefully dedicate today becomes a reality ahead of the most optimistic plans," the program for the dedication services said. "From an original membership of 18 we now number over 900, with a Sunday School enrollment of more than 700. Our future lies in our continuing determination to grow, both in the spiritual and the temporal, following the splendid example set for us by our predecessors. This challenge for the future rests with each of us as we participate in this glorious Day of Dedication."

The phrase "original membership of 18" is a reference to the 18 people who gathered in 1835 to form the Congregational Church.

Historian Walter Holzworth called the completed building "one of the finest church edifices in any



*This is the program from the dedication services on March 20, 1960, for the sanctuary wing of Olmsted Community Church.*

village the size of Olmsted Falls.” The sanctuary includes a massive pipe organ said to cost \$1 million. Since its construction, the church building has served the congregation and the community well. The steeple, which the Harding family paid for, bookends the northern end of downtown Olmsted Falls just as the steeple of St. Mary’s of the Falls Roman Catholic Church bookends the southern end of downtown.



7853 Main Street – OLMSTED COMMUNITY CHURCH – Olmsted Falls, Ohio

*For many years, the Olmsted Community Church used this picture (above) on the front of its Sunday bulletins. It might have been an artist's depiction from the 1950s of what the building would look like after the construction of the sanctuary wing on the left.*

*The inside of the sanctuary is decorated elegantly but simply (left).*



One interesting fact about Olmsted Community Church is that it is located on the original site of St. Mary's. When Catholics started holding services in Olmsted in 1856, they used borrowed facilities in people's homes. In 1858, they built the first version of St. Mary's church on the land where the Community Church is located now. But in 1873, the congregation moved the church to the current location of St. Mary's at the corner of Bagley and Columbia roads. They seem to have moved to get away from the quarrying activities that began about 1870 down by Plum Creek (in what now is David Fortier River Park). In other words, the neighborhood wasn't as

peaceful as it was when the church was built. Of course, by the time the Olmsted Community Church acquired the land and built there, quarrying had been finished for decades, so the site again was scenic and serene. Thus, for the past several decades, Protestants have been worshipping on what once was Catholic land.

In 2016, the Community Church had its steeple, windows, exterior paint, pipe organ, carpeting, restrooms and other amenities renovated in preparation for celebrating its centennial this year.



*The Olmsted Community Church spiffed up with fresh paint and other touches for this year's centennial of the merger that formed the church (above). An artist's depiction of the church and its logo are shown on two mugs from years past (left).*

## Community Church Story Enlightens Sisters

Some *Olmsted 200* readers might have known about the origins of the Olmsted Community Church before the story about it appeared last month in Issue 44 of *Olmsted 200*, but that story cleared up some mystery for certain readers, including two sisters who grew up in Olmsted.

Chris Rice wrote that the story “answered a lot of the questions I have had over the years about the development of religion in our town.” She said she had the misunderstanding that the former Congregational Church had been moved down Columbia Road to become part of St. Mary’s of the Falls, much like St. Mary’s had acquired and reused in the mid-1800s the frame schoolhouse that stood on the Village Green before the Union Schoolhouse was built in 1873-1874. Instead, it was the original St. Mary’s building built in 1858 that was moved down the road to the current location of St. Mary’s, as the Community Church story in this issue explains.

“Bit by bit we all are learning more about our lovely home town.” Rice wrote.



*This photo of the Olmsted Community Church after a snowfall shows the sanctuary wing to the left and the Christian education wing, which was built first, to the right.*

Chris Rice’s sister, Linda (Rice) Mitrik, also said she enjoyed learning how the Olmsted Community Church was formed.

“My husband and I recently joined the Episcopal Church here in Tennessee where we moved from Florida,” she wrote. “As a young girl I did not know the historical beginnings of the Community Church we belonged to as children. It has been a blessing to me having joined this wonderful church here in TN made even more meaningful to learn that the Episcopal Church of Olmsted was one of the denominations which formed my childhood church. I felt like I was ‘coming home’ when we became members of our church, perhaps this new found knowledge is in part why.”

## Olde Wine Cellar Finds New Home in Old Olmsted House

The new location of the Olde Wine Cellar in Olmsted Falls doesn’t have the colorful history of its previous location, but it still is a very old building being repurposed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For many years, the Olde Wine Cellar had a fitting home as part of Grand Pacific Junction at 7990 Columbia Road because that building had been the Fenderbosch Saloon for decades in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Thus, the building had gone full circle from a saloon to a wine shop.



*Until the middle of last year, the Olde Wine Cellar shared space with Master Cleaners in a building that had once been the Fenderbosch Saloon (left). The wine shop was on the right side, which had been the saloon side, and the dry cleaner was on the left side, which had been the pool hall. The photo to the right shows the Fenderbosch Saloon in the late 1800s before the pool hall was added to it.*

But owners Mike and Kari Jacobs wanted more than just a wine shop. In the latter half of 2016, they found a new home for their business just a short distance north at 7932 Main Street. The building there is an old house that was home to the Jenkins Senior Center until the middle of 2014, when the city moved programs for seniors to space inside Olmsted Falls City Hall. That building sat empty for two years until the Jacobses took interest in it.

Cuyahoga County property records (available online) indicate that the house was built in 1893, but other information about the history of the house is sketchy. The records show that the city acquired the property on December 12, 1975, from Frank Schritz.



*The new location of the Olde Wine Cellar is on Main Street, next to where Columbia Road curves to pass over Plum Creek. The creek runs behind the building.*

Mike Jacobs said he and his wife learned a bit about the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the house last year.

“While we were fixing it up and remodeling it, a lady stopped in with her grandkids, and she said she and her brother grew up here,” he said, adding that the family’s name was Combs. “I know that I went to school with her brother. I graduated in ’76, so it was still a house at that time. This part we’re standing in now – the wine room with the tables and the bar – was not on [the house]. This was a back patio they had that overlooked the creek. The entrance to the basement was only accessible through a storm door in the back.”

Further, Jacobs learned that the master bedroom was where the ladies’ room and half of the men’s room are now, and the former master bathroom was located where the other half of the men’s room is now.

“There was a three-season porch,



*The entrance to the Olde Wine Cellar has two sandstone steps that probably came from the quarry that operated in the late 1800s and 1900s nearby in what now is David Fortier River Park.*

and the door wasn't where it is now," he said. "It was over to the left where the window just off the kitchen [is]. The kitchen was right where it [is]."



*Mike Jacobs stands at Olde Wine Cellar bar.*

Most of the structural changes in the building had been made before the Jacobses moved in. The only significant structural change they made was to extend the wall to the kitchen. Upstairs, they use one former bedroom for storage and another as an office.

Asked what it took to make the old house work for the Olde Wine Cellar, Jacobs said, "A lot of spit and polish primarily. We put down new floors. It had a boiler system, so we took that out and put in an HVAC system and shelves and stuff. We put in this bar and then gutted the original kitchen and put in a commercial kitchen. The upstairs – we just pretty much painted."

The big difference the move has made on the operations of the Olde Wine Cellar is that it now can offer food in addition to

the sale of wine, and there is much more room for the wine. The remodeled building includes large windows with views toward Plum Creek and other surroundings. "In the clement weather, we'll have the deck and the front porch open," Jacobs said.



*The dining area (left) includes big windows with views toward Plum Creek and other surroundings.*





*The photo above shows a view of the Olde Wine Cellar with the deck that extends toward the park. The photo to the right shows another view out a window toward Plum Creek.*



It didn't take long for business to pick up at the new location, despite a big gap from the closing of the Olde Wine Cellar in the former Fenderbosch Saloon to its reopening in the former Jenkins Senior Center. "We have an extensive email list, so we emailed them," Jacobs said. "It got busy pretty much the first night."



*Millstone Mercantile now occupies the former Fenderbosch Saloon that the Olde Wine Cellar vacated last year before moving to the former Jenkins Senior Center building a short distance to the north.*

After the Olde Wine Cellar moved out of the former saloon, a new business, Millstone Mercantile, moved in. That's a net gain of one business for Olmsted Falls. The shop is owned by Brett Lojzim, a metalsmith and artist, who creates and sells his works there, as well as handmade products of others. He also offers classes to teach people to make their own creations.

## Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include the story of an Olmsted Township house built in the mid-1800s by members of two of Olmsted's most prominent families. It will include some interesting photos that help tell the history of the house.

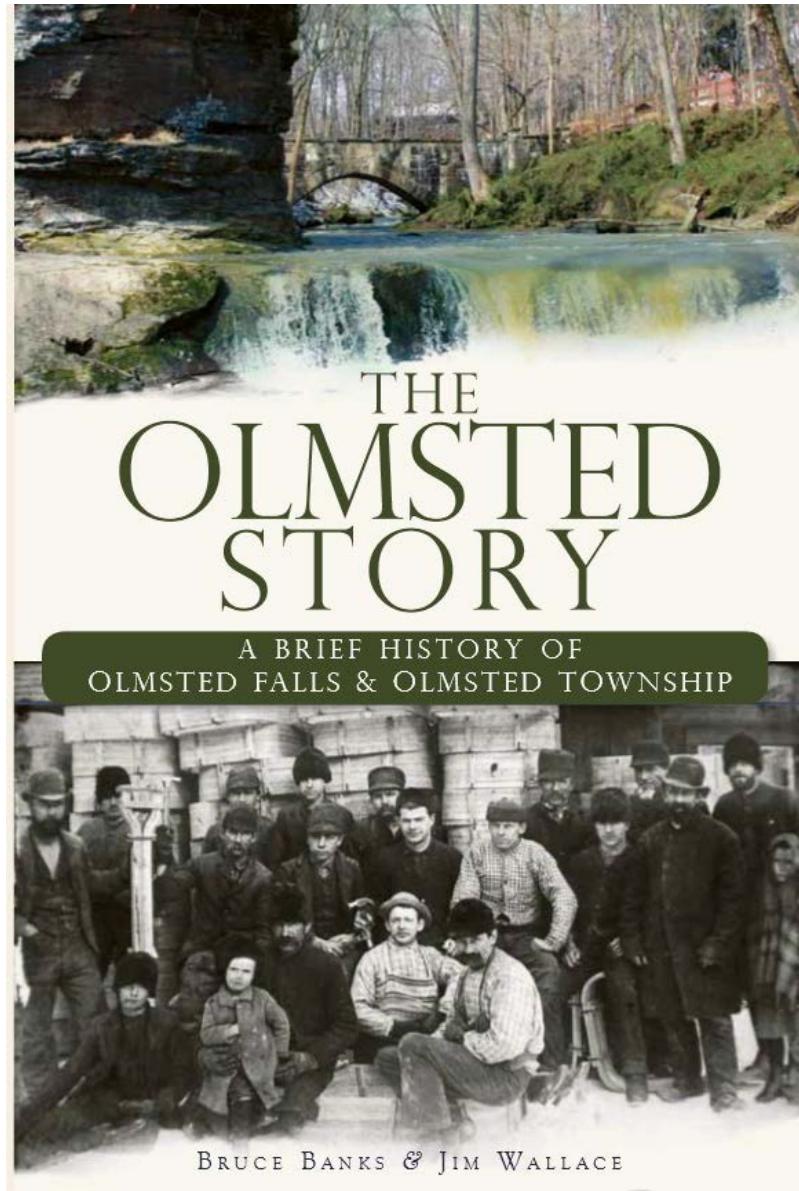
If you know of other people who would like to receive *Olmsted 200* by email, please feel free to forward it to them. They can get on the distribution list by sending a request to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com). *Olmsted 200* has readers in several states beyond Ohio, including California, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Florida, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine, as well as overseas in the Netherlands, Germany and Japan.

Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted's history that you would like to have pulled out of *Olmsted 200*'s extensive archives. Or perhaps you have information or photos about the community's history that you would like to share.

If you have missed any of the past issues of *Olmsted 200* or want to share them with someone else, all of them can be found on Olmsted Township's website. Go to <http://olmstedtownship.org/newsletters/> and click on "Olmsted 200." Then click on the number of the issue you want to read. Please note that Olmsted Township has updated its website, so the address for that link is different than it was in the past.

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Thanks go to Mary Louise King for help in proofreading and editing many issues. Written contributions and photos, as well as comments and questions about items in this newsletter, will be considered for publication. Send any correspondence by email to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com).

*Olmsted 200* is written, researched and edited by Jim Wallace, who is solely responsible for its content. He is co-author (with Bruce Banks) of ***The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township***, published in 2010 by The History Press of Charleston, S.C. ***The Olmsted Story*** is available at the Berea Historical Society's Mahler Museum & History Center and through online booksellers.



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